



2470 Fairfield Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06605
T: 203.549.0075
F: 203.549.0203

www.bcacct.org

Connecticut General Assembly – Labor and Public Employees Committee
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Testimony of the Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition
March 8, 2016
In Support of S.B. 221:
AN ACT CONCERNING PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE

Dear Senator Gomes, Representative Tercyak, and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

The Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition (BCAC) fully supports S.B. 221, an Act implementing a system of paid family and medical leave in the state.

Connecticut is a leader in the country for many social issues and paid leave matters are no exception. Connecticut was one of the first states in the country to pass our own Family and Medical Leave bill and the first to pass paid sick days legislation. While CT's Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) was groundbreaking at the time, that is no longer the case and we need to modernize to the present times. More than most CT workers are not even eligible for FMLA because their employers do not meet the size threshold of 50 or more employees. For a state that promotes small businesses so heavily, FMLA does not live up to par. And for employees who are eligible for FMLA, 78% do not take it because it is unpaid.

S.B. 221 supports all state-wide businesses and families. Mothers and fathers no longer have to stress needlessly the first few months of their baby being born. Both can stay at home, bonding and nursing with their child. They can rest easy knowing they both have jobs to go back to, and weren't docked hours because of their absence. The critical reality of S.B. 221 cannot be overstated, in particular the positive effect it would have in an urban setting such as Bridgeport.

When employees have access to paid family and medical leave, they are more productive and less stressed in the workplace. S.B. 221 would be fully funded by employees with no employer contribution. According to The Institute for Women's Policy Research, the cost to Connecticut employees would be very low at just about one half of one percent of someone's income.

As it stands, mothers and fathers are forced to protect their job and paycheck ahead of caring for their newborn and giving their baby the attention he or she deserves in order to thrive.

BCAC urges your support in passing S.B. 221. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Board of Directors

Diane L. Brassell
Chairwoman
Scott K. Wilderman
Vice Chair and Secretary
Stanley Bernard
2nd Vice Chair
Peter H. Roberge
Treasurer

Gwendoline Alphonso, PhD
Edith B. Cassidy
Robert Francis
Maria Geigel
Linda Goldenberg
Saleh Hanaif
William J. Hass, Ph.D.
Margaret Hiller
Salvatore J. Mollica
Nadine Nevins
Frances Newby
Jane F. Norgren
Gina LeVon Simpson
Linda S. Smith, MS
Tanya Rhodes Smith
Allyson Stollenwerck
Preston C. Tisdale, Esq.
Helen B. Wasserman
Katherine S. Yacavone

Mary Pat C. Healy
Executive Director

Janice Park, *Emeritus*